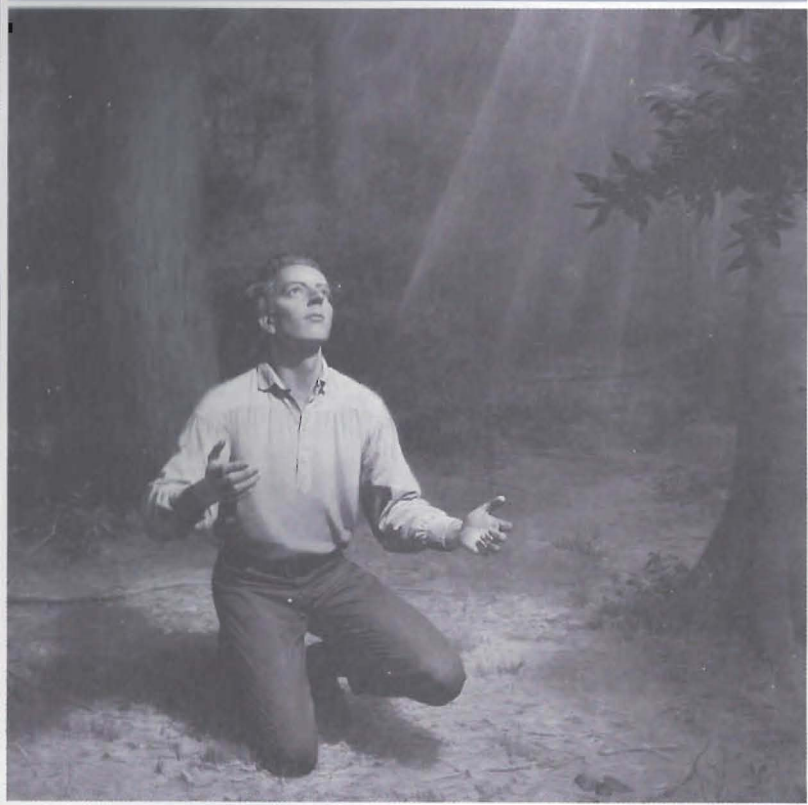


THE RESTORATION

DISCUSSION 3

UNIFORM SYSTEM FOR TEACHING THE GOSPEL



THE RESTORATION

DISCUSSION 3

UNIFORM SYSTEM FOR TEACHING THE GOSPEL

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIS DISCUSSION

Planning for the Discussion

Prepare to teach this discussion by reviewing what took place during your previous visits with the investigators. Plan how you can build upon positive experiences, and anticipate questions and concerns. Specifically, plan (a) what you will do to prepare these investigators to feel the Spirit, (b) when to invite them to make commitments, and (c) how you will follow up to help them keep their commitments.

If the investigators have not yet committed themselves to be baptized or have not yet attended Church meetings, these commitments must be among your major objectives for this discussion. Identify anything that might be holding the investigators back. Make plans for helping them overcome any obstacles.

Review the main principles of this discussion. Then plan how you might present the discussion to build upon experiences you have had with the investigators and meet their needs and interests.

Doctrinal Overview

We can avoid error, know the truth, and be strengthened in righteous living by becoming members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The main principles of this discussion are—

1. Divine truth does not come from human sources. It comes from God, who reveals the truth through his apostles and prophets.
2. Because of the Apostasy, the gift of revelation was lost for centuries.
3. God has again revealed the truth in our day through apostles and prophets of his restored Church.
4. Through Joseph Smith, God restored the priesthood and reestablished the Church of Jesus Christ.
5. We must come unto Christ by joining his Church.
6. The members of the Church receive great blessings by attending Church meetings and partaking of the sacrament.

Commitments

During this discussion you need to help the investigators feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. This will prepare them to make the commitments that lead to conversion and baptism. During this discussion the investigators should commit themselves to—

- Attend sacrament meeting each Sunday before baptism.

In addition, you should reinforce their commitment to be baptized. Invite them to commit themselves to take part in the fourth discussion, to read further in the Book of Mormon, and to continue to pray about what they are learning. (The following reading assignment is suggested: 3 Nephi 11-18; Mormon 7-9.)

CREATE A LEARNING ATMOSPHERE

DISCUSSION

Establish a Reverent Atmosphere and Continue to Build Relationships of Trust

Review

TEACHING HELPS

Set a reverent and relaxed teaching atmosphere. Strengthen the relationship of trust between you and the investigators.

Invite the family head to ask someone to pray. If the investigators have not yet prayed themselves, encourage the family head to offer the prayer. As appropriate, use the "Instruction on Prayer" in the instruction booklet.

Review the following things with the investigators. Use the study guide for the second discussion in reviewing the Book of Mormon readings, the previous discussion, and the commitments.

Book of Mormon. Review what the investigators have read in the Book of Mormon. Answer any questions they have about what they have read. Find out—

- Which passages impressed them the most.
- What questions they have.
- How they feel about what they have read.

Previous Discussion. Review briefly the principles discussed in the second discussion. Discuss with the investigators any questions they have, and help them resolve any concerns.

Previous Commitments and Spiritual Experiences. As directed by the Spirit, review with the investigators their progress in keeping their commitments. Review their preparation to be baptized on (date). Discuss any moments when they have felt the influence of the Spirit since they began learning about the Church. Find out—

- How the investigators have felt as they have read in the Book of Mormon and the study guides.
- How they have felt as they have prayed about the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith, and the other things you have taught them.
- Whether they feel they have received an answer to their prayers.
- How they feel about the Church and their associations with Church members.
- How they feel about the importance of living the commandments of God.
- How they have felt as they have thought and prayed about being baptized.

DISCUSSION

Introduce This Discussion

TEACHING HELPS

Remind the investigators that many of the beautiful truths about the Savior you discussed last time were revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith. This time you would like to discuss more about the mission that Joseph Smith was called to fulfill.

PRINCIPLE 1 TRUTH VERSUS ERROR

DISCUSSION

We Must Find and Accept the Truth

The truths in the plan of our Father in Heaven are eternal and unchanging. They are the basis for all his commandments. Only through these truths can we find lasting happiness and prepare for eternal life. It is essential that we find the truth, accept it, and live according to it.

The Ideas of Men Are Limited

The ideas of men are always limited and changing. Human wisdom can never lead to a full understanding of eternal truth. God is the only source of truth about the plan of salvation.

Christ Formed His Church

When Jesus Christ was on earth, he formed his Church. One reason he did so was to make sure that the truth was taught. He called apostles and prophets and gave them authority to teach his gospel and act in his name. This authority is called "priesthood."

The Church Is Led by Revelation

After his death, Jesus continued to lead his Church by revelation to his apostles and prophets. These men held his priesthood authority. They taught the truth and recorded these teachings in the scriptures. In this way, the truths about the plan of God were taught clearly, without confusion.

TEACHING HELPS

Find Out—

- Whether the investigators understand that the priesthood is the authority to act in the name of God, not a group of priests or ministers.

Find Out—

- Whether the investigators believe that continuing revelation to apostles and prophets would be important in helping them find peace and lasting happiness.

DISCUSSION

TEACHING HELPS

Testify: Express your feelings about—

- The blessings that have come into your life through the truths of the gospel.
- The importance of continuing revelation through apostles and prophets chosen by God.

SCRIPTURAL RESOURCES

Ether 4:12 (Whatever persuades men to do good is of Christ, who is the light, life, and truth of the world.)

Amos 3:7 ("Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.")

John 3:21 ("He that doeth truth cometh to the light.")

John 17:17 ("Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.")

Ephesians 2:19-20 (The Church is built on a foundation of apostles and prophets.)

Topical Guide: Church Organization; Joseph Smith; Revelation; Trust Not in the Arm of Flesh; Truth

EXAMPLES

To show that knowing the truth and obeying the commandments brings freedom, not restrictions:

Imagine a man who passed through a busy intersection on his way to work. Every day he had to wait at the traffic light. He always resented the wait. However, one day the traffic light was broken. The result was great confusion among the drivers. Instead of a brief delay, he needed several minutes to cross the intersection safely. The commandments of God may appear restrictive. But in the long run we will have greater freedom in our lives if we obey them.

To show that we cannot rely on human knowledge and understanding for eternal truth:

Briefly mention a few scientific theories that people once believed but later found to be inaccurate. For example, you might mention the ideas that the earth is flat or that the sun revolves around the earth. Modern scientists realize that current theories may be superseded as we gain more knowledge.

PRINCIPLE 2 APOSTASY

DISCUSSION

The Apostles of Jesus Christ Were Rejected

Jesus sent his apostles into all the world to teach his gospel and establish his Church. But many people rejected and persecuted them. Even Church members fell into error and unrighteousness.

Priesthood Authority Was Lost

Because of the wickedness of the people, the apostles and many of the righteous Church members were killed. The Lord took the priesthood authority and his Church from the earth. There was no longer a church on earth directed by revelation. Because men relied on human wisdom to understand the scriptures, many plain and simple truths were lost.

Confusion and Apostasy Resulted

As a result, there has been great disagreement and confusion in the world about the truths of the plan of God. Many false ideas of men have been taught as truth. This general falling away from the truth is called the Apostasy. The apostle Paul prophesied about this apostasy. [Read and discuss 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3.]

TEACHING HELPS

Find Out—

- Whether the investigators understand that an apostasy occurred.
- Whether they understand why the loss of direct revelation to apostles and prophets would lead to confusion and error.

Testify: Express your feelings about—

- The need for continuing revelation to overcome confusion and misunderstanding about the plan of God.

THE APOSTASY

"For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first." 2 Thessalonians 2:3

SCRIPTURAL RESOURCES

2 Nephi 28 (Nephi prophesied about apostasy, false churches, and false doctrines.)

Mormon 8:28 (The power of God will be denied and churches defiled.)

Isaiah 29:13 (People draw near to God with their mouths, but their hearts are far from him. They are taught by the precepts of men.)

Amos 8:11-12 (The Lord will send a famine of hearing his word. The people will "seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.")

Matthew 24:9-11 ("False prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.")

Acts 20:29-31 ("Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples.")

Ephesians 4:14 ("Be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.")

1 Timothy 4:1-3 ("In the latter times some shall depart from the faith.")

2 Timothy 3:1-7 (Among those in the last days will be many who have "a form of godliness," but deny the power thereof, "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.")

2 Timothy 4:3-4 ("They will not endure sound doctrine.")

2 Peter 2:1-2 ("There shall be false teachers among you.")

Topical Guide: Apostasy of the Early Christian Church; Trust Not in the Arm of Flesh

EXAMPLES

To show why continuing revelation is so important:

(As appropriate, use the investigators' own vocations in the example.) Suppose you were a mechanic. After you graduated from school, you decided not to study new car manuals or keep up on new developments in your field. What would happen? We too need direction from God that is applicable to the times in which we live.

To show how the apostles played a crucial role in maintaining truth in the Church: Read and discuss 2 Timothy 2:18 to show that Paul corrected false teachings about the resurrection.

To show that the Apostasy was already beginning in the days of the apostles: Read and discuss one or two passages in the New Testament which show that false doctrines were being taught, such as— Galatians 1:6-8 ("I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.")

1 Timothy 1:5-7 (Some have turned aside from the truth, desiring to be teachers, but understanding not what they say.)

2 Timothy 2:18 (False teachings had arisen regarding the resurrection.)

1 John 2:18 ("Even now are there many antichrists.")

To illustrate what happened to the Church when the Lord took away the priesthood authority:

Read and discuss Ephesians 2:19-20. Draw a simple picture of a building, with the foundation clearly marked. Write *Apostles and Prophets* on the foundation. Explain how the apostles and prophets were the foundation of the Church. Then erase or cross out the foundation. Ask what happens to a building when the foundation is weakened or destroyed.

PRINCIPLE 3 THE RESTORATION OF TRUTH

DISCUSSION

God Revealed Truth to Joseph Smith

To overcome the effects of this apostasy, God has proclaimed his truth to us in our day. He has proclaimed it through living prophets, just as he did in Bible times. As we explained in our first visit, God the Father and Jesus Christ visited Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820. They came in answer to Joseph's prayer.

Joseph Was Told Not to Join Any Church

They told Joseph not to join any of the churches because the churches were teaching incorrect doctrines. The people understood many Christian principles that helped them lead good lives. But they also misunderstood some basic and vital truths because these truths had been lost centuries before.

Joseph Translated the Book of Mormon

As a chosen prophet of God, Joseph Smith did some very important things to help us know the truth. Through him the Lord brought forth additional scriptures. As we explained in our first visit, Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by the power and inspiration of God.

Joseph Recorded Other Revelations

Joseph Smith recorded other revelations that he received from God. Some of these revelations are found in two books of modern-day scripture called the Doctrine and Covenants and the

TEACHING HELPS



Find Out—

- Whether the investigators feel it would be important for them to know that a church upon the earth is being led directly by Christ through revelation. Why would knowing this be important?
- Whether they feel it would be important for them to be members of that true Church of Jesus Christ.
- Whether they have received answers to their prayers.

Testify: Express your feelings about—

- How the truths revealed through modern-day prophets have helped you.

DISCUSSION

Pearl of Great Price. These books of scripture show us that God continues to give revelation to guide his children.

TEACHING HELPS

- The Prophet Joseph Smith and his first vision.
- The Book of Mormon and the revelations to the Prophet Joseph Smith recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price.

SCRIPTURAL RESOURCES

EXAMPLES

1 Nephi 13:40 ("These last records [the Book of Mormon] . . . shall establish the truth of the first [the Bible].")

2 Nephi 29:3, 8 ("Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word?")

Helaman 3:29 (The word of God will "lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course.")

Isaiah 29:13 (In the last days, the people will be taught by the precept of men.)

Amos 8:11-12 (There shall be a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.)

D&C 5:9-10 (This generation shall have the word of God through Joseph Smith.)

D&C 18:34-36 (We can read the scriptures by the power of Christ. When we do, we can testify that we have heard his voice.)

JS—H 1:8-20 (Joseph Smith was told to join none of the churches.)

Topical Guide: Joseph Smith; Scriptures, Study of; Scriptures, Value of

PRINCIPLE 4 THE RESTORATION OF THE CHURCH

DISCUSSION

Joseph Smith Received the Aaronic Priesthood

In addition to bringing forth these important scriptures, Joseph Smith received the priesthood—the authority to act in the name of God. John the Baptist, who had baptized the Savior, restored to Joseph the authority to baptize. This authority is called the Aaronic Priesthood.

Joseph Received the Melchizedek Priesthood

A short time later the apostles Peter, James, and John, whom Jesus had called to lead his Church, restored to Joseph Smith the higher priesthood authority. This is called the Melchizedek Priesthood. Through this higher power and authority, the Church is directed and rich blessings are brought into the lives of its members.

Gospel Ordinances Can Be Performed

All necessary gospel ordinances are performed by the power of these two priesthoods. By the authority of the priesthood we are baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. This gift enables us to receive personal inspiration and guidance from God.

The Church Was Organized

After Joseph Smith had received the priesthood authority, the Lord commanded him to reestablish the Church of Jesus Christ on April 6, 1830.

TEACHING HELPS



DISCUSSION

The Church Is Named after Christ

Because Christ is the head of the Church, it is called the Church of Jesus Christ. The name of the Church today is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to distinguish it from the Church of Christ in ancient times.

This Is the Only True Church

The Lord testified that this is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30).

SCRIPTURAL RESOURCES

3 Nephi 27:3-10 (The Church is to be called by the name of Christ.)

Ephesians 2:19-20 (Christ is the chief cornerstone of the Church.)

D&C 1:29-30 (Joseph Smith was authorized to organize the Church.)

D&C 1:30 (The Lord testified of the one true Church.)

D&C 13 (Joseph Smith received the Aaronic Priesthood.)

D&C 20:1-4 (The Church was organized according to the laws of the land.)

D&C 27:12 (Joseph Smith received the Melchizedek Priesthood.)

D&C 115:3-4 (The Church shall be called The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.)

D&C 121:34-46 (The priesthood can be exercised only upon the principles of righteousness.)

Topical Guide: Church; Church, Name of; Priesthood, Authority

TEACHING HELPS

Find Out—

- How the investigators feel about the restoration of the priesthood and the Church.
- Whether they accept the fact that only one church can be the true Church of Jesus Christ.

Testify: Express your feelings about—

- The restoration of the priesthood.
- The importance of the priesthood in your life.
- Your knowledge that this is the true Church of Christ.

EXAMPLES

To show that the priesthood was important to the early Church and also that it could not be purchased for money:

We see from the scriptures how important and sacred this power of the priesthood was. The Lord did not give priesthood authority to everyone, but only to those who would use it in the right way. For example, one day the apostles were baptizing and giving the gift of the Holy Ghost to people. A magician named Simon wanted to have the same power the apostles did. Peter told Simon that this gift of God could not be purchased with money. (Read Acts 8:18-21.)

To show the importance of the priesthood:

Suppose someone you knew printed some driver's licenses. To save time you took one of his licenses instead of going to the state driver's license bureau. Do you think a policeman would honor that kind of driver's license? Why not? Similarly, anyone who acts for God must have authority from him, or the act is not valid.

PRINCIPLE 5 MEMBERSHIP IN THE TRUE CHURCH

DISCUSSION

God Has Called Apostles and Prophets in Our Day

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is led today by a prophet and twelve apostles. The Lord has called these men in our day just as he did in Bible times. They receive revelation from God and have his priesthood. Thus, they can teach his plan, perform his work, and direct his Church with authority. They help clarify past confusion and misunderstanding by teaching the correct knowledge of the plan of salvation. We accept these men as prophets of God. We follow the guidance and direction the Lord gives us through them.

Come unto Christ by Belonging to His Church

We must come unto Christ by belonging to his Church. [*Read and discuss Moroni 6:2-4.*] Only in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can we find all the truths that will help us return to our Father in Heaven. Only in the Church can we find the authority to perform the necessary gospel ordinances. By being baptized and joining the true Church of Christ, we show that we accept Christ.

TEACHING HELPS

Discuss: Tell the investigators a little about the President of the Church and the twelve apostles.

Find Out—

- Whether the investigators recognize the need to belong to the true Church of Christ.
- Whether they accept The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as the only true Church of Jesus Christ.

Testify: Express your feelings about—

- The President of the Church and the twelve apostles.
- Your assurance that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true Church of Jesus Christ.
- The need to belong to the only true Church.

This would be an appropriate time to reconfirm the investigators' commitment to be baptized on (date).

SCRIPTURAL RESOURCES

Mosiah 18:16-19 (All those whom Alma baptized were added to the Church.)

Acts 2:37-47 (Those who hear the word are commanded to be baptized and are added to the Church.)

D&C 1:38 ("Whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.")

D&C 10:55, 69 (Members of the Church of Christ who endure to the end will inherit the kingdom of heaven.)

Topical Guide: Church

EXAMPLES

PRINCIPLE 6 ATTENDING CHURCH MEETINGS AND PARTAKING OF THE SACRAMENT

DISCUSSION

Meet Together Often

[Read and discuss Moroni 6:5-6.] The Lord has commanded the members of his Church to meet together often. A basic duty of Church members is to attend weekly worship services and take an active part in the Church. Worship services are held regularly for the benefit of the members.

The Sacrament Is Part of Our Worship Services

An important part of worship services in the Church of Jesus Christ is the ordinance of the sacrament. Other groups sometimes call this ordinance "communion" or "the Lord's Supper."

The Savior Introduced the Sacrament

The Savior introduced this ordinance during his last supper with the apostles before he was crucified. From that time on, the followers of the Lord met each week on Sunday ("the Lord's day") to partake of the sacrament.

We Use Bread and Water

In the Church of Christ today, we use bread and water as sacrament emblems to represent the body and blood of Christ. His followers partake of the sacrament in remembrance of his sacrifice for them.

We Make a Covenant

As with other ordinances, those who partake of the sacrament are making a covenant (or promise) with the Lord. As

TEACHING HELPS



DISCUSSION

our part of this covenant, we renew the promises that we make at baptism. We will take upon us the name of Christ, always remember him, and keep his commandments.

The Lord Promises Us His Spirit

The Lord, in turn, promises that if we keep our covenants, we will always have his Spirit with us. We will continue to enjoy the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost.

In Worship Services, the Members Strengthen Each Other

In addition to partaking of the sacrament during worship services, the members teach each other the gospel. They enjoy a sense of unity, mutual strength, and fellowship with other members. Those who neglect these meetings miss blessings that the Lord has provided for us.

Attending Worship Services Will Bring You Blessings

After you become a member of the Church, attending worship services and partaking of the sacrament will bless your life. Doing these things will help you keep the Sabbath day holy and know the truth more fully. You will see the priesthood in action. You will be strengthened in keeping the commandments. You will better understand the plan of our Father and make the atonement of Christ more effective in your life.

TEACHING HELPS

Find Out—

- Whether the investigators understand the purpose of the sacrament, including the covenant we make when we take the sacrament.
- Whether they recognize the great blessings that come from partaking of the sacrament.

Testify: Express your feelings about—

- The sacrament and what it represents.
- The spiritual blessings that come from partaking of the sacrament often.

Find Out—

- Whether the investigators understand why the Lord wants his people to worship him together, and not merely individually and in private.

Testify: Express your feelings about—

- The spirit of worship that you feel in Church meetings.
- The importance of regular attendance at Church meetings.

Commitment Invitation: Church Attendance

The local congregation meets at (place) at (time). Will you attend Church with us this Sunday?

Find Out—

- Whether the investigators understand what you expect of them.
- How they feel about this commitment.

Follow Up: Discuss how you can help the investigators keep this commitment. For example, you could—

- Arrange for a member acquaintance to go with them. (Or if necessary, introduce them to a member who could go with them.)
- Stop by in a day or two to answer any questions.
- Explain the meeting schedule of the local ward or branch and the purpose of each meeting.
- Prepare them for what they will find at Church meetings. Make sure they understand that they will not be asked to participate. They may sing, but they should not partake of the sacrament until they have been baptized.
- Give them the pamphlet *Come and See*, with the meeting times noted.

You should also—

- Inform the ward or branch priesthood leaders that the investigators will be attending Church.
- Talk with the friendship family to make sure they take the investigators to Church.

SCRIPTURAL RESOURCES

3 Nephi 18:22 (Christ commands his followers to meet together often.)

Moroni 4-5; D&C 20:75-79 (The manner of administering the sacrament is explained.)

Matthew 26:26-27; 3 Nephi 18:1-12, 28-29 (Jesus institutes the sacrament.)

Luke 22:19-20 (Christ commands the disciples to partake of the sacrament “in remembrance of me.”)

1 Corinthians 11:20-29 (“Let a man examine himself” before partaking of the sacrament.)

D&C 27:2 (It matters not what we eat or drink in partaking of the sacrament if we remember the sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ.)

D&C 43:8-9 (Meetings are to help us instruct and edify each other and to help us bind ourselves to act in holiness.)

D&C 59:9-13 (“Go to the house of prayer. . . upon my holy day.”)

Topical Guide: Meetings; Sacrament

EXAMPLES

To show why membership in the Church is necessary:

Fellowship with other members is like a fire made with many logs. Together, the logs make a great fire and generate much heat. But if the logs are separated to burn individually, they soon cool. Instead of bright flames, they produce a dull glow. If they are left alone, soon the glow will die. Church members need to meet together to share convictions, to learn from each other, and to strengthen one another.

To show the blessings that come from attending Church meetings:

As appropriate, share a spiritual experience you have had while attending a Church meeting.

CONCLUSION

DISCUSSION

TEACHING HELPS

Additional Commitments

Baptism

Strengthen the investigators' commitment to be baptized on (date). Confirm their scheduled baptism date (or invite them to be baptized if you have not already done so). Discuss any further preparation that is needed and how you can help.

Taking Part in the Next Discussion

Make sure you obtain a firm commitment for the investigators to take part in the fourth discussion (usually within the next two to three days).

Reading and Praying

Help the investigators commit themselves to continue reading in the Book of Mormon and praying to know the truth of what they are learning. (The following reading assignment is suggested: 3 Nephi 11-18; Mormon 7-9.) Also encourage them to continue reading the Book of Mormon from the beginning.

Referrals

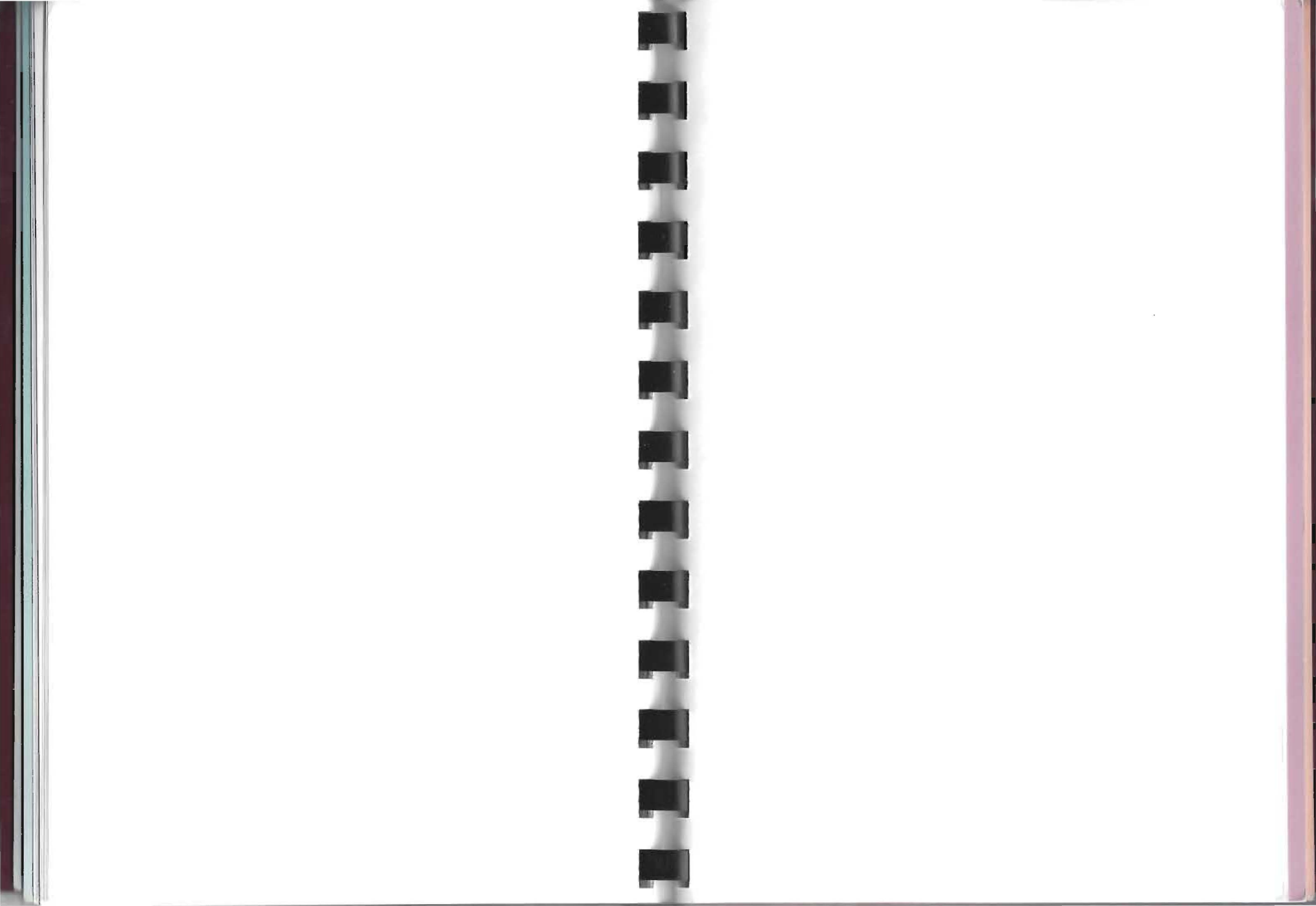
As appropriate, help the investigators identify friends and relatives who could be invited to hear your message. As appropriate, use the "Referral Invitation" in the instruction booklet.

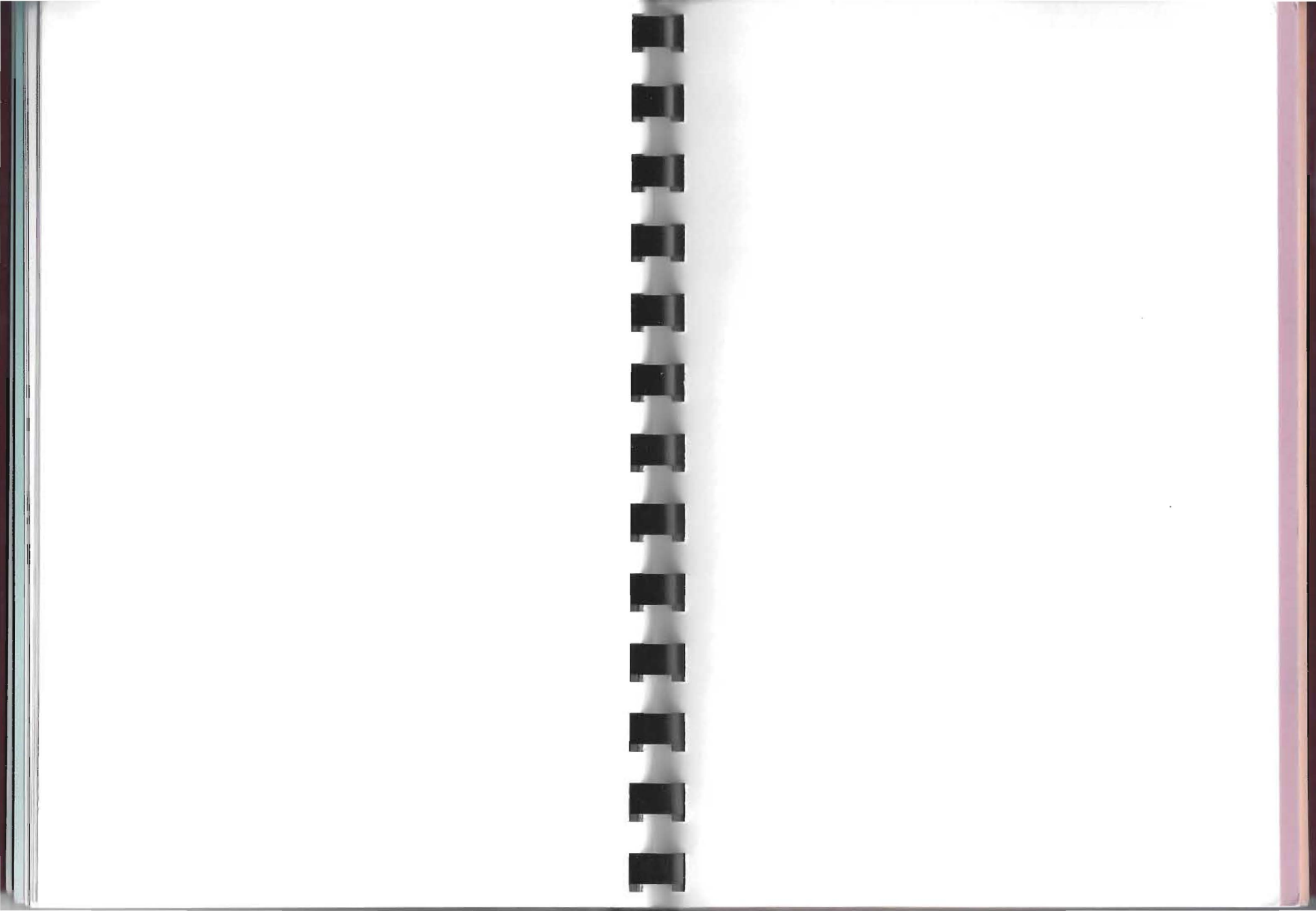
Study Guide

Use the study guide for this discussion to review the principles you have discussed and the commitments the investigators have made. Mark any scriptures to which you want to draw special attention. Fill out the information on the back of the study guide, including the date of your next appointment. Explain that you will be glad to answer any questions during your next visit.

Close with Prayer

By now the investigators should be willing to offer the prayer. Suggest that the family head ask one of them to pray. If necessary, use the "Instruction on Prayer" in the instruction booklet to reinforce the basic pattern of prayer.





THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



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